

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SYDNEY 01220 260243Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 OES-07 ERDA-05 EPG-02
/077 W

-----260526Z 048215 /23

R 260102Z MAY 77

FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7612

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SYDNEY 1220

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: ALP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE

1. JOHN DUCKER, ALP STATE PRESIDENT FOR NEW SOUTH WALES, TOLD ME YESTERDAY EVENING THAT HE CONTROLS THE DECIDING FOUR VOTES FOR THE ALP LEADERSHIP ELECTION NEXT TUESDAY. BY HIS OWN COUNT, WHITLAM AND HAYDEN ARE ALMOST DEAD EVEN IN COMMITTED VOTES.

2. DUCKER SAYS HE WILL GIVE HIS VOTES TO WHITLAM IF WHITLAM WILL, IN TURN, AGREE TO INSURE THE ELECTION OF PAUL KEATING AS DEPUTY LEADER OVER TOM UREN, THE PRESENT INCUMBENT FROM THE LEFT WING OF THE PARTY. AS DUCKER POINTS OUT, KEATING IS AN OUTSTANDING YOUNG MAN WHO SHARES DUCKER'S OWN THREE MAJOR HANDICAPS: HE IS A MODERATE, A ROMAN CATHOLIC, AND IS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES. DUCKER GIVES EXTREMELY HIGH MARKS TO KEATING'S PERFORMANCE AS SHADOW MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY. HE BELIEVES KEATING WILL BE THE KEY MAN IN PREVENTING THE PARTY FROM FORECLOSING ITS OPTIONS ON THE URANIUM MINING QUESTION AT THE FORTHCOMING PARTY CONGRESS. IT IS VITAL, IN DUCKER'S VIEW, THAT AN ANTI-URANIUM POLICY NOT BE CAST IN CONCRETE AND BECOME IRREVERSIBLE. IN DUCKER'S ANALYSIS, 1981 IS THE KEY YEAR

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PAGE 02 SYDNEY 01220 260243Z

BY WHICH TIME URANIUM MINING AND EXPORTS SHOULD BE IN FULL SWING WITH APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDS. BY THAT TIME, HE BELIEVES,

DECLINING DOMESTIC PETROLEUM PRODUCTION WITH ACCOMPANYING BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS FOR AUSTRALIA WILL COMBINE WITH INCREASED WORLDWIDE URANIUM DEMAND AND NEW TECHNIQUES FOR WASTE DISPOSAL TO MAKE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF URANIUM EXPLOITATION

ATTRACTIVE TO ALL PARTIES IN AUSTRALIA. THE IRRECONCILABLE
LEFT-WINGERS WILL CONTINUE TO OPPOSE IT AS AT PRESENT FOR
POLITICAL RATHER THAN ECONOMIC REASONS.

3. COMMENT: DUCKER'S HEALTH SEEMS MUCH IMPROVED NOW THAT HE
HAS RETURNED FROM A 14-DAY CRUISE ON ONE OF THE RUSSIAN PASSENGER
LINERS PLYING OUT OF SYDNEY. HE CHUCKLED ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF
ATTENTION LAVISHED ON HIM BY THE CAPTAIN AND CREW. HE SAID HE
WAS SEEN OFF PERSONALLY BY THE SOVIET CONSUL GENERAL IN SYDNEY.
HE AGREED THAT HIS OWN WING OF THE LABOR PARTY WAS A MAJOR
TARGET OF THE PRESENT CIA UPROAR AND NOTED RUEFULLY THAT,
WHILE THE PRESENT INTENSITY OF INTEREST WOULD CERTAINLY FADE,
THESE RECURRING CAMPAIGNS HAVE UNFORTUNATE RESIDUAL EFFECTS
WHICH ARE CUMULATIVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS, PARTY PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTH
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SYDNEY01220
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770187-1211
Format: TEL
From: SYDNEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770512/aaaaakpd.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2349985
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE
TAGS: PINT, AS, ALP, (DUCKER, JOHN)
To: CANBERRA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/237be888-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009